



THE BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT



BLUEPRINT

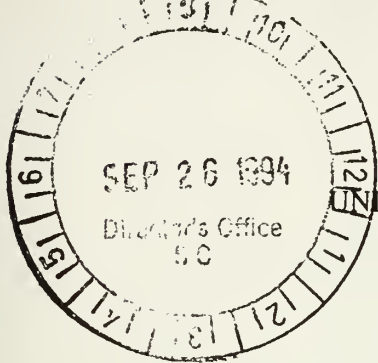
for the Future

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U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management





UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Land Management
Washington, D.C. 20240

September 22, 1994

In Reply
Refer To:
1000 (110)

Information Bulletin No. 94-535

To: SD's, SCD, AD-F&LE
From: Director
Subject: "Blueprint for the Future" DD:10/7/94

We are sending you, under separate cover, copies of the "Blueprint for the Future."

Over the next several weeks we will be sharing this document with key Congressional Committees, other Federal agencies, non-BLM participants at the Summit, national user groups, and national public interest organizations. We would appreciate it if you would do the same in your area.

In your conversations, please emphasize that the Blueprint will evolve over time and that we would welcome suggestions for improving it. We are also very interested in any assistance others may offer to help achieve the goals outlined in this document.

We plan to print a second run in the new fiscal year. Please let us know by Friday, October 7, 1994, how many copies you would like to receive. Also, please notify us of any changes that you think we may want to consider making in the document for the second printing.

If you have any questions concerning the Blueprint or need any additional information, please contact Kit Muller at (202) 208-7701.

Steve Richardson
Deputy Director for
External Affairs

1 Attachment (sent under separate cover)
1 - "Blueprint for the Future" (16 pp)

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From the Director

September 1994

Dear Reader:

The following pages describe how the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is preparing to move toward the 21st century. This Blueprint for the Future was developed through an extensive process that began in the summer of 1992 and concluded with the BLM Summit in April 1994. During the weeklong Summit, 400 BLM managers met with over 100 outside participants to discuss the challenges we face and to help us chart a course for the future.

The Summit participants helped us identify the following five overarching goals:

- Maintain healthy ecosystems,
- Serve current and future publics,
- Promote collaborative leadership,
- Improve business practices, and
- Improve human resource management practices.

The first two goals address our commitment to the land and the public we serve. To accomplish these goals we must transfer more financial and human resources to the field level of our organization. We will be able to do this only if we become a more efficient and effective organization—the focus of the last three goals.

I will assign the strategies described in the Blueprint to my Assistant Directors for implementation. They will be responsible for establishing priorities and for developing more detailed action plans. We cannot undertake all of these strategies at the same time.

Please note that we have also prepared new Mission and Vision statements. We think they reflect the changing face of the West, the needs of the land, and the demands of the American taxpayer. Our goals are ambitious. They signal a new direction and vision for the BLM.

Reconciling the needs of the people with the limits of the land is not an easy task. The only remaining frontiers in the West are found in the spirit of its people. Our charge is to respect that spirit while providing for the long-term needs of society. We simply cannot hope to do this without first securing the health of the land.

I urge you to help us accomplish our goals and to make our vision a reality.

Sincerely,

Mike Dombeck



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THE AGENCY

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is responsible for managing close to 270 million acres (110 million hectares) of land—about one-eighth of the land in the United States—and 570 million acres (232 million hectares) of subsurface mineral resources. Most of these lands are located in the western United States, including Alaska, and are dominated by extensive grasslands, forests, high mountains, arctic tundra, and deserts. The BLM manages a wide variety of resources and uses including energy and minerals, timber, forage, wild horse and burro populations, fish and wildlife habitat, wilderness areas, and archaeological and historical sites.

The BLM's roots go back to the Land Ordinance of 1785 and the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. These laws provided for the survey and settlement of the lands that the original 13 colonies ceded to the federal government after the War of Independence. As additional lands were acquired by the United States from Spain, France, and other countries, Congress directed that they be explored, surveyed, and made available for settlement. In 1812, Congress established the General Land Office in the Department of Treasury to oversee the disposition of these federal lands. As the 19th century progressed and the nation's land base expanded further west, Congress enacted a wide variety of laws to encourage settlement. These laws included military bounties; grants for the construction of wagon roads, canals, and railroads; the Homesteading Laws; the Mining Law of 1872; the Desert Land Act of 1877; and the Timber and Stone Act of 1878. One of the underlying assumptions in these laws was that eventually all of the federal lands would be transferred to private interests or state and local units of government.

The creation of the first national parks, forests, and wildlife refuges in the late 19th century signaled a shift in philosophy. By withdrawing these lands from settlement, Congress made it clear that they were to remain under federal ownership and management.

In the interest of resource conservation, Congress also enacted a number of laws early in the 20th century directing the Executive Branch to begin to manage activities on the remaining public lands. The Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 provided for leasing, exploration, and production of selected commodities such as coal, oil, gas, and sodium. The Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 established the U.S. Grazing Service to manage the public rangelands. In 1946, the Grazing Service was merged with the General Land Office to form the Bureau of Land Management within the Department of the Interior.



At that time, there were over 2,000 unrelated and often conflicting laws concerning management of the public lands. The BLM had no unified legislative mandate until Congress enacted the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA).

In FLPMA, Congress recognized the value of the remaining public lands to the American people and declared that these lands would remain in public ownership. Congress also codified the principle of "multiple use" management, defined as "management of the public lands and their various resource values so they are utilized in the combination that will best meet the present and future needs of the American people."

While adhering to this multiple use mandate, the BLM's management direction has evolved over the last 18 years as the bureau has adapted to new Congressional directives and court decisions, changing demand patterns, and a maturing understanding of what is required to use natural resources on a sustainable basis.

In managing the public lands, the BLM performs a wide variety of functions including, but not limited to, taking inventory of resources; preparing land use plans and assessing environmental impacts; conducting land surveys; issuing leases and other use authorizations; enforcing permit conditions; designing and constructing roads and other improvements; restoring degraded fish and wildlife habitat; identifying and protecting significant natural, cultural and recreational resources; and monitoring resource conditions. In addition, the BLM maintains the original property and cadastral survey records of the United States. All of these activities are conducted with extensive public participation and in coordination with other federal agencies; state, tribal, and local governments; and other affected interests.

The BLM is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with field offices throughout the United States. It also operates several specialized offices including a national training center and a fire center.



THE CHALLENGE

The American West is changing. A growing and increasingly urban population is placing new demands on the natural resources of this vast region. These changes in demand, taken together with growing public concern over the health of waterways, grasslands, and forests; an increasingly complex set of legal mandates; greater knowledge of how to manage natural resources on a sustainable basis; and the technological opportunities provided by computers, are creating significant challenges and opportunities for the BLM. These changes challenge us to:

- *Become more aware of the status, trend, and overall health of the land.* We need to collect new types of scientific information, make better use of the data we already possess, and communicate the implications of this information to the public; adjacent private property owners; other federal agencies; and state, local and tribal governments.
- *Work with new groups of people and expand our relationships with traditional land users.* We must become more open and collaborative in our decision-making procedures.
- *Help local communities anticipate and adjust creatively to changing environmental, social, and economic conditions.*
- *Work across larger geographic areas and plan for longer time frames.* We need to look beyond traditional professional and administrative boundaries and work more closely with neighboring property owners. We must recognize the regional, continental, and international implications of our resource management decisions.
- *Identify and protect significant natural and cultural resource values on the public lands.*
- *Continue to refine our understanding and practice of multiple use.* We must identify thresholds to use and encourage sustainable resource use patterns.
- *Delegate more authority to field managers, measure their performance, and hold them accountable for results.*



- *Become more efficient in our use of human and financial resources.* This will require us to redesign and automate many of our existing permitting and administrative procedures.
- *Expand the skills mix of our work force and ensure that each employee has meaningful opportunities to help the agency accomplish its mission.*

Faced with these challenges, the BLM is changing. Increasingly over the past few years, the BLM has begun to: treat ecological impacts on an ecosystem or landscape scale; recognize the demands of new public land users while still addressing the needs of traditional user groups; recognize the unique role of the public lands in conserving significant ecological and cultural resources; employ more open and collaborative decision-making procedures; and streamline and modernize administrative processes. To date, many of these changes have occurred at the field level through collaborative efforts with other agencies, adjacent landowners, and local publics.

In order to share and build on this field experience, in April 1994, the BLM convened the BLM Summit, a meeting of all BLM managers and over 100 people from outside of the organization. Outside participants included cattlemen, environmentalists, oil and gas operators, loggers, recreational users, the press, and representatives from state, local, and tribal units of government. Five overarching strategic goals emerged from the weeklong meetings.

These goals, the actions required to accomplish them, and a mission and vision statement for the BLM are outlined in the following pages. Together, they chart the BLM's new course.

THE MISSION

The Bureau of Land Management administers public lands within a framework of numerous laws. The most comprehensive of these is the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA). All bureau policies, procedures and management actions will be consistent with FLPMA and the other laws that govern use of the public lands.

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

THE VISION

The Bureau of Land Management will:

- Provide for a wide variety of public land uses without compromising the long-term health and diversity of the land and without sacrificing significant natural, cultural and historical resource values;
- Understand the arid, semi-arid, arctic and other ecosystems it manages and commit to using the best scientific and technical information to make resource management decisions;
- Resolve problems and implement decisions in collaboration with other agencies, states, tribal governments, and the public;
- Understand the needs of rural and urban publics and provide them with quality service;
- Maintain a skilled and highly professional work force;
- Clearly define and achieve objectives through the efficient management of financial, human, and information resources;
- Efficiently and effectively manage land records and other spatial data; and
- Commit to recovering a fair return for the use of publicly-owned resources and to avoid creating long-term liabilities for the American taxpayers.

STRATEGIC GOALS

Maintaining Healthy Ecosystems

Goal: Restore and maintain the health of the land

Discussion:

Healthy, productive, and naturally diverse ecological systems are essential to the nation's stability and well-being. Healthy ecosystems also ensure that future generations enjoy social, economic, aesthetic, spiritual and other benefits from the land. *Ecosystem Management in the BLM: From Concept to Commitment* provides a framework for the BLM's approach to ecosystem management. The BLM is committed to maintaining and restoring the long-term health of the public lands. This will be done in partnership with state, local, and tribal governments; other federal agencies; and interested publics.

To effectively implement ecosystem management, the BLM will need to: better understand historic and present conditions of the land; use science and technology to identify and relieve stresses to the land's health; and work with the public to develop consensus goals for the health of the land. Obtaining this information and achieving these goals will require coordinated planning and collaborative approaches to implementation. Periodic integrated assessments will be conducted at various scales to help the BLM make better management decisions.

These assessments will help the BLM to:

- Define critical baseline information on the status and trend of the land's health;
- Predict direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of activities on the land, water, and air; and
- Identify and evaluate long-term trends.



The BLM will work closely with the National Biological Survey and others to use historic and existing information and the results of assessments to identify indicators of ecosystem health and function (e.g., water temperature, streambank stability, and percent native vegetation). Management actions will then be modified in response to adverse changes in ecosystem health and function. The BLM will use and share the best scientific and technical information available to support land use decisions and management direction. Thus, local communities and governments will be better able to anticipate and adjust to changing social and economic conditions.

The BLM will implement or develop policies for measuring, restoring, and maintaining the health of the land in coordination with other agencies, units of government, and educational institutions. We will encourage extensive public participation in planning processes. The BLM will recognize the need for local and regional flexibility to accommodate site-specific conditions and natural events such as drought, fire, and flooding.

Actions to achieve the goal include the following:

- Improve existing inventory and monitoring procedures; identify gaps, eliminate duplication, and standardize procedures with other agencies where possible.
- Conduct ecological and socio-economic assessments such as the proposed National Interagency Ecological Assessment and watershed analysis processes.
- Enhance our ability to manage, exchange, and use automated spatial and land record data.
- Develop ecologic and social indicators that measure the health of the land and the sustainability of local communities. Initial efforts will focus on key river basins, arid and semi-arid regions, and arctic tundra.
- Revise planning procedures to reflect ecosystem management principles. Develop regional standards to guide resource management and use.
- Inventory significant natural, cultural, historical and recreational resource values on the public lands and initiate protective measures where appropriate, including land exchanges.
- Identify degraded ecosystems that should be restoration priorities.
- Document and share successes in implementing ecosystem based management approaches.



Serving Current and Future Publics

Goal: Improve service to the public and encourage sound use practices

Discussion:

The demands being placed on the public lands are growing in tandem with the number and diversity of the people the BLM serves. Our ability to meet these new demands will depend on improving the bureau's *accountability* to users of the public lands while emphasizing the *responsibility* of those users to adhere to an ethic sensitive to the land's health and responsive to the public's right to receive fair value in return.

The BLM will focus on the desired *outcomes* of land management policies and practices, both in terms of the health of the land and the needs of our publics, including adjacent landowners and other citizens impacted by activities the BLM authorizes. We intend to become a better neighbor in local communities by implementing a series of recently issued Executive Orders concerning pollution prevention, recycling, use of environmentally preferable products and services, and environmental equity issues affecting minority and low income populations.

The BLM has historically made land available for authorized private sector activities, such as recreation, energy and mineral commodity extraction and production of livestock forage; and we will continue to do so. Taxpayers should expect to receive a fair return from such transactions, consistent with existing laws. The BLM also will ensure that environmental impacts on the land and on other users are minimized so as to prevent long-term impairment or the creation of unfunded taxpayer liabilities.

Two additional Executive Orders which call for eliminating one-half of the BLM's internal regulations and improving customer service support efforts to reengineer and radically streamline the BLM's authorization and permitting procedures.

The BLM will develop and adhere to standards for customer service and adopt a "one window" approach for dealing with the public. Underlying this concept is a mutual obligation: the BLM will provide more efficient and cost-effective services while customers will cover the costs associated with program administration and resource use.

Actions to achieve the goal include the following:

- Revise existing use authorization and land acquisition, disposal, and exchange procedures to focus on performance, combine related functions, and capitalize on the opportunities for automation.
- Form partnerships with states, interested private landowners, and public land users to prevent pollution and restore degraded public land; seek assistance from local communities, organizations and individuals to provide needed services, thus ensuring local involvement in safeguarding and managing the public lands.
- Develop and execute an auditing system to assess and improve upon the safety and environmental performance of BLM facilities, procedures, and internal management practices.
- Provide for appropriate protection of the public lands, their resources, and users.
- Develop and execute a strategy for assuring fair return for uses of the public lands, including providing opportunities for competitive bidding where appropriate.

Promoting Collaborative Leadership

Goal: Foster more inclusive decisions and better accountability

Discussion:

Collaborative decision making requires timely inclusion of viewpoints and ideas. This should begin early in the process and proceed through implementation and monitoring of results.

For the BLM, collaborative decision making encompasses both an internal and an external component. Internally, the BLM is moving toward a more informed collaborative decision-making process, with more employee empowerment and interdisciplinary teamwork. The BLM will need new skills to facilitate this teamwork and manage change. The BLM also will develop new procedures for measuring performance and holding team members accountable.

The BLM will learn how to better include external parties in decision making. BLM managers already encourage extensive public involvement in meeting their responsibilities. When such involvement is effective, it results in more informed and timely on-the-ground decisions.

It will be the BLM's policy to include employees and the public in the decision-making processes, where legally permitted, and to work collaboratively to reach sound decisions. These efforts should significantly promote understanding, reduce conflict, and improve decisions.

In situations where conflict persists despite collaborative efforts, the BLM will encourage the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) procedures. ADR is any process used to prevent, manage, or resolve conflicts or disputes without resorting to traditional courtroom litigation or formal agency administrative appeals systems such as the Interior Board of Land Appeals. Rather than ask a court to make a decision, the parties may use a variety of processes such as negotiation, facilitation, conciliation, mediation, fact finding, or mini-trials to assist in preventing or resolving the dispute.



Actions to achieve the goal include the following:

- Clarify the roles, responsibilities, and operating procedures of the BLM's management teams.
- Review existing delegations of authority for consistency across program or activity lines; where appropriate, further extend these delegations to the BLM's field managers.
- Review regulations and internal directives to identify areas where future guidance should cut across or combine specific programs or activities to foster a broader, interdisciplinary approach; prepare bureau-wide policy on collaborative processes including guidelines for components of Alternative Dispute Resolution.
- Expand government-to-government relations with Native American Tribes.
- Develop position descriptions, performance measures, and evaluation procedures that will promote internal and external collaborative processes, empower managers and employees, and foster accountability.
- Identify effective collaborative methods and techniques for working with external publics; provide training for employees at all levels in collaborative techniques and managing change.
- Promote interagency cooperative efforts such as personnel exchanges and the co-location of field offices.



Improving Business Practices

Goal: Improve the way we do business

Discussion:

Improving the way we do business means increasing our efficiency and effectiveness. *Efficiency* is about getting the most out of every dollar. *Effectiveness* is about meeting customer requirements and achieving our mission.

Effective organizations have clear goals and objectives established by listening to their customers and stakeholders. These goals and objectives are articulated so that every employee understands how the work he or she does contributes to achieving the mission. Such organizations measure progress toward achieving goals and objectives and apply the feedback to adjust plans and optimize performance in a cycle of continuing improvement. Effective organizations are forward looking and they plan and budget accordingly. Finally, effective organizations are adaptable; they institutionalize the lessons of both success and failure.

Efficient organizations track what it costs (in both time and dollars) to deliver their products and services. They continuously seek ways to reduce costs while improving the quality of the product or service. They engineer business processes around customer requirements as well as for simplicity and efficiency, and they make cost-effective use of technology.

In recent years, the BLM has stepped up efforts to improve business practices. In 1992, BLM work groups began looking at ways to streamline business practices in several key areas including budgeting, contacting, and planning procedures. While these recent efforts have given the BLM a head start, there is much more that can be done. The strategies outlined below are designed to increase efficiency and effectiveness significantly by strengthening the performance of the agency in the areas described above.

Actions to achieve the goal include the following:

- Develop and implement a bureau-wide strategic planning system that will identify and update goals and objectives on a periodic basis.
- Develop and implement a simplified and effective performance measurement and reporting system tied to strategic goals and objectives.

- Develop and execute a strategy for applying quality management principles in the BLM.
- Develop and execute a strategy to modernize information systems and more effectively manage the BLM's information resources.
- Reengineer the BLM's major management systems (budget, financial management, procurement and evaluation) and initiate a cycle of continuous improvement for these systems to save time and money, eliminate waste, and increase responsiveness and accountability.
- Realign the organizational structure to increase organizational performance, improve communications and reduce overhead.
- Increase internal knowledge, skills, and ability to perform strategic planning, performance measurement, quality management, and process reengineering.

Improving Human Resource Management

Goal: Recruit, develop, and retain a quality and diversified work force

Discussion:

Employees are our most valuable resource. We will diversify and invest in our employees to ensure they have the skills needed in the 21st century.

Five new challenges require a simplified and creative new strategy:

- Ecosystem management requires a different and expanded skills mix.
- A more diverse customer base requires that the composition of our work force accurately reflect contemporary American society. We must take maximum advantage of limited recruiting opportunities to meet both critical skills shortfalls and work force diversity objectives.
- Given the demographics of the BLM's work force, we expect that a significant number of employees will retire in the near future.
- There is a shortage of positions at the field level.
- Steady, if not declining, work force populations coupled with increased demands for quality customer service will require us to work smarter. We need a work force that is adaptable, versatile, and mobile.

Actions to achieve the goal include:

- Develop target skill models for both the scientific and adaptive management elements of ecosystem management, including techniques for collaboration, facilitation, mediation, and team management.
- Develop a simple and flexible position management and recruitment system, emphasizing assistance to field managers and maximum use of the hiring flexibility resulting from National Performance Review streamlining efforts.
- Invest in a comprehensive, capacity-building program to help field managers get more external resources involved in BLM programs and to generate additional sources of diversity recruitment.



- Establish an organizational focal point for employee development policy direction and priority setting. Incorporate accountability for human resource program outcomes into policy and budgetary decisions and individual performance agreements.
- Establish a Human Resources Development Board to provide advice on bureau-wide training policy and to help coordinate training activities.
- Develop an "open" approach to succession planning that involves employees and is supported by a structured career counseling process. Identify career paths and managerial competencies needed in the future.

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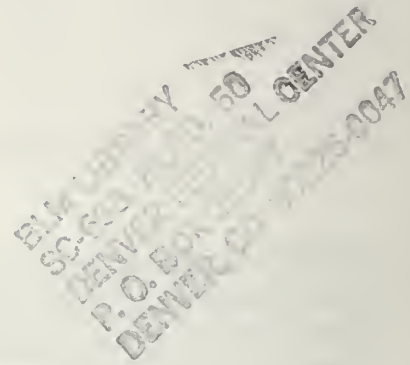
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